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WHEN CROWS FLY IN AVONDALE

PROLOGUE

The end of the day
Is turning to dusk;
Weariness that cares not to speak is
on one,
The pressure of toil is yet unlifted.

All is silent
Save for footsteps going home,
Your own and others:
Somewhere behind you the noise of street
cars
And machines.

1. Suddenly above you
The air is in motion;
There is a noise of wings moving,
A rush of small bodies,
Strangely silent in their wending,
When crows fly in Avondale.

2. When crows fly in Avondale
They choose a tree
And, swooping,
People it:
Each twig its crow,
All talking at once,
Telling everyone in Avondale
Everything,
With hoarse crow abandon.

3. You see them coming
From the east
To Avondale,
And then the west.
They crowd the roadways of the sky
Hardly intervaled,
Black beak to black tail;
Breasting the treetops,
A carpet of crows.
The foremost start the undulation
That lifts them over the big beech
And down in a great swirl,
Over the unplanted lawn,
Lifting again to wing the hill;
Streaking across the sunset glow of the
north
On
Straight to the heart of the sunset.

EPILOGUE

After their passing
People stand upon their lawns
Pensive,
As though old dreams had come and gone
On sable wing,
When crows fly in Avondale.

Helen Macdonald Avery.

WHITE LILACS

It was a ver' long, white stair,
An' when she came down to me
Her feet went lik' that, that.
Y' understan' she was ver' tall
An' dark,
An' maybe her scarf was lik' wings.
An' I notice before she was there
In the window
Not so ver' far abov' me,
A bowl of white lilacs.
They were so beau'ful.
An' then she was there,
Not so ver' far abov' me,
But so high
That the flowers in th' window—
In back of her, y' understan'—
They make her look lik' she hav' lil' bride's crown.
Well—well, when she tol' me I mus' go
An' lef' me,
She went back up that long, white stair—
It was not so ver' long then.
Well—I always remember thos' white flowers,
An' I think it's lilac time now,
An' maybe you lik' to hear about them.

Helen Macdonald Avery.

VISIT OF THE VOLUNTEER SOCIAL WORKER

"Whadda yuh want?
No, there ain't no Marie Brown here.
Yuh musta got th' wrong place.
No, there ain't no crippled child next door, neither.
How'd yuh happen t' come here?
Somebody told yuh?
They musta been makin' up a story on yuh.
No, there ain't no Marie Brown here.
Can't understan' why people seem t' think so.
Somebody wuz here th' other day askin' about her.
No, they—they come t' see her about a picture or somepin.
There ain't no Marie Brown *here*, I know that.
Too bad. Somebody musta made up a story on yuh.
'Twasn't no trouble."
Bang!
"Marie! Can't yuh keep your ornery mouth shut?
Looks as though yuh was enough trouble, draggin' that limb around
Without pullin' my skirt an' wantin' t' talk.
Next time I'll give yuh to her!"

Helen Macdonald Avery.

THE LAST NIGHT DISTILLED FROM SUMMER

Always,
I suppose,
There will be the garden.
But will there be willows
Dripping shadows onto the ground,
With moonlight slipping down their stems?

And this moon—
It has come before.
I suppose
That it will come again;
But will it find the willows
The same? The same?

You promise me a winter garden
As beautiful as this?
But there are no willows!
Where are those running rivulets of leaf?
There is only an old brown jug
Full of whips.

Nay, do not attempt to console me.
If you must know,
This! This is the nectar of the night;
That it is the last distilled from summer
Before the cricket crawls under the door
And finds the crack in the hearth.

Helen Macdonald Avery.

BUBBLES

Blue with flower and shadow,
  Gold with cloud and tree,
The wide world is a bubble
  The gods have blown for me.

Green with flame and fountain,
  Grey with town and sea,
The wide world is a bubble
  The gods will burst for me!

Virginia Biddle.

THE CROSSROADS

Blackbird in the maple,
  Oriole in the dell,
Robin out of April,
  —All, farewell!

If I find a tavern,
  Merry luck for me;
Long and bitter is the night
    Wayfarers see!

Trillium of the wildwood,
  Windflowers white,
Bluebells like the queen's hood,
—All, good night!

If I find a tavern,
  Vagabond and gay,
Laughter shall companion me
  That last long way!

Virginia Biddle.

THE FAR ADVENTURE

Your soul, with march imperial,
Must still press proudly on
In vast adventures, Titan-willed,
Beyond our farthest dawn.

Unconquerable, O Beloved,
You shook life's galling bars;
And death was one adventure more
Before you stormed the stars!

Virginia Biddle.

THE FLIRT

Oh, was it once in Camelot,
When stars were gold and flowers were red,
I made the vows that I forgot
As soon as they were said?

To-day your scornful laughter woke
My careless heart to dumb surprise,
And somebody whose heart I broke
Mocked at me with your eyes.

Virginia Biddle.

THE RETURN

I reach the quiet little gate,
  I strain the latch and call,
"Open, open, Garden,
  —I am here, after all!"

Soft through hedge and poplar bough
  Sifts the pale starshine;
The moon is one blue petal
  Poised above the pine.

"I have returned, O Garden,
  Though I am late, Love knows."
The garden is all silence
  And a wild white rose.

(You scarcely hear the silver step
  Of Love across the grass;
It is so dim you scarcely see
  Love's face, alas!)

I beat upon the thorny hedge,
  Like death the stillness grows;
—Only once the garden yields
  Her wild white rose!

Virginia Biddle.

SING-SONG

You broke my heart in London town,
  My gaiety in Kew;
Now I forget the vows you said,
  And think no thought of you.

But I would go to London town,
  And I would go to Kew,
Beyond all dreams if I again
  Could break my heart for you!

Virginia Biddle

REVENANTS

What is the cry in the wind
  Rising to more and more?
Voice of a soul returning
  Out of the unseen shore.

What is it stands without,
  Beating vain hands on the door:
"Open, and let me in
  To the warm hearth known of yore!"

Oh, to wail in the dark,
  To beat on the window-pane,
To hear a loved voice say:
  "Hark! The wind is rising again."

Here in the home I knew
  I stand at the midnight hour:
Why does the light burn blue,
  And my hound by the threshold cower?

The body stands like a bar
  Between my soul and thine;
Mortal eye may not sense the mesh
  Of spirit-tissue fine.

I am but a cry in the wind
  Or a tap on the window-pane.
The whimpering hound and the taper know,
  But to thee I call in vain.

Alice Williams Brotherton.

ITALIA REDENTA

(An Italy Redeemed)

I

Italy, one and free!—no menace more
Of the Northern Wasp, whose flaunting yellow
and black
Before the brave Tricolor is rolled back,
Dipped low and dripping with the invader's
gore!
Dead Poet, once yon casement leaning o'er
To watch the returning Austrian's wolf-pack,
Hear now, above shell-boom and rifle-crack,
The tramp of Allied Patriots pass your door.

Oh, Casa Guidi windows should be gay
This hour with Italy's red, white, and green,
While guns are crashing Freedom's overture:
To-day, from that high casement overlean
With you, to watch the dawn of the New Day—
Massini, Garibaldi, and Cavour.

Alice Williams Brotherton.

SAPPHICS TO SAPPHO

Muse of Lesbos, violet-wreathed Sappho!
Weaving songs still fragrant with flower perfume,
Heart of flame, lips breathing a subtle music,
Loved of Apollo!

Ringing, singing, down through the ages sweeping,
Come faint echoes wandering out of silence,
Sound of lyre-tones wrung from a woman's heart-strings
Throbbing with passion.

Just to have lived, voicing the joy of living;
Just to have loved, chanting the depths of loving;
Boon enough this, surely, for any mortal!
This the gods gave thee.

Art thou dust, O maker of matchless strophes?
Still burns bright the flame of thy deathless spirit
In this gold-dust handful of perfect lyrics
Snatched from oblivion!

Alice Williams Brotherton.

THE CHOICE

Is it the choiring of the spheres?
  Or the clear pipes of Pan?
Which will you choose, O Youth, to use?
One must you take and one refuse,
  Since ever the world began.

Since ever the world began no one
  Could use both pipe and lyre.
Will you play the strains that climb to heaven?
Or reedy nature-songs that leaven
  With joy the heart's desire?

"Oh, leave the choiring of the spheres
  To angels, not to man.
The life within my veins runs sweet,
The rhythm of life is in my feet,—
  Give me the pipes of Pan!"

Alice Williams Brotherton.

THE LOTUS EATER IS BORED

Let us go hence from smiling girls and song,
And leave them to their isles and summer seas.
Our hearts are weary of weird melodies
That warn us we are absent overlong
From our harsh mistress, whose rough hand is strong
Upon our breasts, whose white endearments freeze
Lascivious blood, whose angry harmonies
Are glorious as a far-heard battle-gong!

Come, kiss the brown-cheeked wench and let us go,
Tautening slack rope, spreading sun-dried sail
To the soft-bosomed wind that prates of love!
Hold northward 'til the Great Bear swings above
And through the maniac December gale
The walrus bellows challenge from the floe!

John Williams Brotherton.

THE ISLE OF OTHERIE

It was an ancient sailor man who told the tale
to me,
A bearded, ear-ringed mariner, who sunned him
on the quay
Beside the white-sailed *Flying Cloud*, the ship
of Faerie.

"Oh, maids are sweet in Dunedin, and loving in
Bombay,
But all of them are nowt to me, for all the night
and day
I hear my little mermaid's song and dare not
turn away!

"It was upon a summer morn, upon the Indian
sea,
The captain called me aft to him, and said to
me, says he:
'We'll heave to by that island, the isle of Otherie.

" 'You'll take the longboat and the casks and
seek fresh water, son;
We'll let the crew e'en stretch their legs and
have a little fun;
The nags are full of beans, and we'll just let the
rascals run!'

"So when we came to Otherie we backed a top-
sail then;
I left the captain, cook, and boy, and took my
jolly men,
I tell you, it was good to set our feet on earth
again!

"Some climbed the trees and flung down nuts for
sport upon their pals,

Some turned right in and slept like dogs, with waking intervals,
And some few grouched and cursed because they couldn't see no gals.

"We filled our casks with water, and then I took a walk.
I like to go a-swimming where there are none to gawk;
But turning 'round a corner, I came upon a rock.

"There sat a youthful mermaid, all pink and white and neat!
Her riggin'—what there was of it!—was rayther incomplete.
She wore her own bright hair, my lad, and smiled upon me sweet.

"I stood like one dumbfoundered—until she smiled at me.
She says, 'My merry sailor-boy!' and stretched a hand so free.
So down I plumps to hear her sing, all by the tropic sea.

"She combed and brushed her golden hair and sang most sweetly there,
I sat alongside worshipful—we were a happy pair!
Till of a sudden from the ship I heard a wrathful blare.

" 'Ahoy, there, men!' the captain cried, 'You've had your run ashore!'
I sat like one possessed, for from the sea there came a roar,
And, rising from the foam, I saw what haunts me evermore!

"It was my mermaid's mother, and furious was
she!
She scolded darling daughter, and her language
it was free,
But daughter laughed and bade her hush, and
leaped into the sea.

"Before she leaped, I caught at her and kissed
her on the cheek.
She was quite plump and soft to touch, but had
a fishy reek.
But never mortal maiden's lips were half so fair
to seek!

"And that is why I never mind the girls nor
dream of wealth,
I dream of seeking Otherie, and courting her by
stealth!
And very glad indeed I'd be to drink your
honor's health."

John Williams Brotherton.

THE SHIPS OF TYRE

Come, all ye deep-sea men, to sing the bold
Phœnician sailors
Who faced the tempest and the sun that
seared us face and neck!
No more the green seas breaking in foam on our
cut-water
Will fill our eyes with bitter spume the while
we clear the wreck!
No more we'll go a-trading,
Or raiding,
With half the wild world's lading crammed
underneath the deck!

On the lone beach our signal fire told all the
troubled tribesmen
That we were there to buy of them their furs
and skins and gold.
Withdrawn awhile, we watched them as they
conned our trade-goods over,
Then went to take our fair exchange, to fill the
spicy hold.
Ah, it was honest trading,
Parading
Our trinkets and our lading until our goods
were sold!

Then gaily back to Tyre we rolled, we bold
Phœnician sailors,
Who met the Biscay gale and dared the rough
cross-channel sea!
We laughed at those whose hasty trips with
ivory, apes, and peacocks
Brought hasty wealth from Solomon, for
sailor-men were we!
We scorned the greasy grubbers!
The lubbers!
Deep-water mariners we were, who spent their
money free! *John Williams Brotherton.*

TO DAPHNE

Daphne hath a fairy hand,
  Sure, there's no hand softer!
All the bells of Fairyland
  Ring in Daphne's laughter!

Daphne hath a winning smile—
  Would that I might win her!
Weariness would she beguile
  When I came home to dinner.

Daphne, all my dreams are vain;
  But while stars are gleaming,
I'll just hug my lovely pain,
  And go right on dreaming!

John Williams Brotherton.

O BLOSSOM OF THE PEACH

O blossom of the peach,
  And moon of daffodil,
Why is the flute of spring—
  The magic flute—so still?

She loved the wild wood-note;
  She loved the redwing's call;
She flung her blossoms down,
  And left me, love and all.

She followed, star by star,
  The crystal path of spring;
But after she had fled
  The wood birds did not sing.

O blossom of the peach,
  And moon of daffodil,
Why is the flute of spring—
  The magic flute—so still?

Frank Byers.

AN UNWEEDED GARDEN

'Tis an unweeded garden
Wherein I dig these evil days—
A town-lot, unfenced,
A broken wheel or two from a wheelwright's shop,
Ashes and paper and ashes,
And a sign: "Throw no refuse here;"
And finally the weeds, the good, sturdy weeds
That cover up everything until the snow comes.
Across the street is an old German church
With a new glittering gilt sign in English:
The old one "Deutsche Kirche" has been thrown
On the town-lot,
And the weeds have covered it up.
Nearby is a billboard
With lithographs of a whole hareem
Of ladies in an Oriental fantasy,
And a playbill of Hamlet the Dane,
Who lived in an unweeded garden also:
He will live there again, too,
For playbills are but paper, and paper
Mixes excellently well with ashes.
'Tis a neighborhood of unclean frogs
And niggers, of painted women and sickly children.
All of them throw their refuse on the lot;
The weeds grow over it,
And the genial city smiles,
And goes for a promenade—
On another street.
Why don't the aldermen make laws?
Well, only a man who loves his unweeded garden
Can make laws for it.
I have begun to love the place

Wherein I dig, and, God willing,
I shall love it better.
Perhaps I may find among the dull green
rosettes
Of mullein, or the long tails of spear-grass,
Some star design more beautiful than a blue
and white whirligig
From a page of old Persian manuscript.
Already there is a stalk of wild mustard
With a bee swinging on it.
"Ah, now," you say, "what a pretty touch!
He has found a flower, and presently
He will tell us what God and man are."
If I had made it a red columbine,
You would have accused me of radical sym-
bolism,
A very Bolshevik symbolism—
But I spoke of wild mustard:
And that's yellow!
It means that I am a coward,
And you are a coward,
And so there's an end to the matter.

Frank Byers.

NIGHT QUERY

Why do the bare poplar branches,
Brushing the moon-shield
Like a witch's broom,
Remind me of empty vases
Which you filled once
With clear water
And pear blossoms?

Frank Byers.

FROM PHRYGIA I WILL BRING ECSTASIES

From Phrygia I will bring
Ecstasies for you to sing,
And a flute of graven silver,
Decked with scarlet blossoming.

Orpheus to Eurydice,
Pan beneath a lilac tree,
With his reeds that were the Syrinx,
Played no sweeter melody

Than you will play for me some morn
When the spring has just been born,
Bursting out in redbud rapture,
As the March wind blows his horn.

Then the burning loves of old,
Richer argosies than gold—
Heart of Sappho, heart of Helen—
At your fluting shall grow cold.

Even in your softest strain,
Gentle as the kiss of rain,
There is such bewildering passion
Of love's miracle of pain!

Frank Byers.

MY LOVE IS A MOUNTAIN OF BLUE LARKSPUR

My love is a mountain of blue larkspur,
A valley of rose mallow fire,
Where loose are the hounds of passion
And the red birds of desire.

Up through the larkspur racing
The hounds run close to the sky;
Between the sun and the scarlet meadows
The shining red birds fly.

Now in the world of my heart it is morning,
And the skies of love are white;
But whither, O Beauty, shall the hounds of passion
And the red birds go to-night?

Must they wander alone in the larkspur,
These hounds on the mountain brim?
Must the red birds fly in darkness
Till the stars of dawn grow dim?

Or will you sing, my Belovèd, an aspen against the full moon,
To quiet the hounds that are swifter than fire,
And hold in the nest of your pale green fingers
The red birds of desire?

Frank Byers.

MUTATIONS

Autumn sunlight;
Beech trees shooting a glory of amber
Up chasm and glen.

Sunlight
To winter grey and low clouds drifting;
White bole,
Flutter of faun-colored leaves,
Lifting of white arms;
Ten thousand tendrils
Fingering the sky.

Grey
To blue;
Silver of trunk and bough—
The shaking of spun gold;
A million fingers embroidering magic
Black-threaded on azure.

Blue to showers of April,
Sun interspersed and warmth in the glades;
Life singing in branch and twig,
Largess of leaves strewn over rock and stream bed—
Over purple of violet,
Over green of wild myrrh;
Lengthening of buds,
Tight spirals of gold brown—
One inch—two inch—
Two-and-a-half inches.

April to clear of May;
Soft shards peeled from beech buds and scattered,

Unwinding of spirals;
Out of their casings
Green leaves.

May green
To June green;
August, November;
Frost and wind.
Silver again and grey,
Amber again;
Lacework, embroidery,
Magic;
The cycle established.

So beauty,
So truth—
Eternal in change.
Eternal!

Hubertis Cummings.

TO ———

'Twas in your arms that Brooke, the poet, died;
In the last hour your eyes still hoped to see
Life bloom back to his cheeks—and victory.
Those very arms of yours were at his side
When Skyros' earth received in love and pride
Rich dust of England's dust—a poesy
Blended of English sun, air, flower, and tree
In him—to sleep above a Grecian tide.

Last week you grasped my hand with your right hand,
And then a-sudden came a feeling deep
Of marvel at sweet kinships—yours to Brooke,
Mine now to you! O sacred, mystic band,
Down the long years may I those dear vows keep
I made to beauty when your hand I took!

Hubertis Cummings.

"NESSUN MAGGIOR DOLORE"

Spirals of blue smoke will no more arise
Up from our fire through boughs of greenery
To catch the winds and whirl in ecstasy
After white sun-lit clouds on summer skies
And lose themselves for love: it were more wise
If still we burned dry sticks beneath our tea,
Still broiled our sausage and shared our glee,
Down in the woods, with laughter in our eyes.

Now only can I image how we threw
Water upon our fire and, coming on that day
Up to the hill road higher than the trees,
Both turned and saw the smoke had changed
its hue,
Lying upon the woods inert and grey,—
Heavy as heartbreak—fanned by no sweet
breeze.

Hubertis Cummings.

Had lightning done the work,
Twisted, rent, blasted,
Torn the wings, smashed the head,
Dug out the vitals;
Blue lightning forked with fire,
Flaming down the elemental din
Of night, surging to chaos—
But that man should play
The demoniac destroyer!
With cunning craft
Wrenching stone from stone,
Unhinging pediments,
Toppling porticoes into the mire,
Cracking Norman arches into fissures,
Gaping like grimaces of mountebanks,
And, broad Rabelaisian joke,
Torturing gutters till they sag
Like protruding entrails.

The old ghost groans in the reeking sun,
And yields up its secrets one by one.

Twenty-four lots—
Twenty-four elegant building lots
For houses in onion strings
Huddled and fuddled and muddled
Over the naked crunched bones
Of this vast vermin-haunted pile.

Secrets of death and marriage and birth,
Chuckles of grief, sobs of mirth;
And the people crowd to gossip and stare
At high-bred intimacies stripped bare.

Bungalow boxes up to date,
Interiors ample for floor lamp, Victrola,
Davenport and period suite;

Solaria huge like probosces;
And—majestic chicken coops
Enthroned on the side sod—
Garish garages.
Women with beef from ankle to knee,
Loose-lipped men paunched pudgily,
They swarm like beasts to jostle and stare
And grab at the place for their future lair.

"So this is where they found my lady's
maid!
Uh-huh—the very dark closet.
(Murder or suicide, nobody knows.)
How did they ever live
Without bathrooms!
It's as I told you, my dear!
The judge and his wife slept in separate
rooms.
Phew! Mangy old furniture!
They were paupers, simply paupers
At the end!"

The old ghost shudders at set of sun
And draws back its secrets one by one.
The blue dusk trails a sapphire veil,
The moon drops shadows rare and pale,
And dew-drenched cobwebs curl their frail
Cool fingers 'round mad, throbbing wounds.
The old ghost sleeps until the sun
Shall rend its secrets one by one.

Fanny Desjardins Fishburn.

GOOD NIGHT

Through the house I glide;
Night outside.
Grandmother sleeps in her tall, carved bed,
I think I could paint her so
In the wraithy candle glow,
Where her silvery braids and the lace on her head
Gleam like elfin snow.
And she's so old, my grandmother,
So calm, and still, and white,
I wonder if she ever joyed
And feared as I, to-night.
Her smile has the peace of a loving saint,
When the flaming of life grows far and faint
In the shadowy long ago.

I go through each room;
Without, in the gloom,
Stars bloom.

Mother sits in her widow's gown
In a blur of lamplight faint—
A figure I could not paint;
Heart feels the dear head drooping down,
Not gray—brown.
For she's so young, my mother,
All brimful of fire.
I wonder why life passed her by
At fine flood of desire
To brood with the pain and the infinite want
That creep from the wastes of the night to haunt
The heart all lonely grown.

O grandmother, it is I
Aflame with life—
Mother, I—
Athrob with glorious fulfillment!
Kiss the blinding tears from my eyes
Ere I go to rest—
Ere I go to my lover's breast!

Fanny Desjardins Fishburn.

THE DOOR

The close-shut door, why does it swing?
I drop my sewing, rise and stand
To hold outstretched a welcoming hand,
And yet I can't see anything
But just a door that stands sidewise,
That seems to stare in mute surprise.

The open door—I shut it tight,
And go about to do my chores,
Forgetting locks and bolts and doors,
To find it swinging left to right,
As animated as though it
Had come to sew and talk and sit.

Again I shut it, but I feel
That I am shutting something out—
Whatever can it be about?
It makes me nervous head to heel,
Its staring swing, its to and fro,
Like something caught that wants to go.

Josephine Redmond Fishburn.

THE DREAM

The gods walked to the close-shut cabin door,
And touched the latch and made it keenly scringe
Upon its rusty hinge,
Then crooned aloud, half-fitful as a snore—
Old pa-a-a-a-sum,
Possum up a tree;
Pa-a-a-a-sum up a tree,
Taters, taters in the ground,
Lookin' all around,
Taters in th' ground.

And then the gods, black, woolly, dignified,
Hung possums to the latch and wall and sill,
While 'Rastus with a will
Awakened, sat upon his bed and cried,
Old paw-a-a-sum,
Possum up a tree;
Paw-a-a-sum up a tree,
Taters, taters in th' ground,
Lookin' all around,
Taters in th' ground.

Josephine Redmond Fishburn.

SONG OF THE GRANDMOTHERS

Two grandmothers I have had—
  Bridget and Christina.
My mother's name is Barbara,
  And I am Josephina.

Bridget came from fairy-land,
  Fay and very fair;
She wore a dress, a shining dress,
  And lace caps on her hair.

Grandmother, Grandmother, dance with me
Under the boughs of a wishing tree.

Christina, on the other hand,
  Came from the land of trolls,
Of captive maidens, giants,
  And of melancholy souls.

Grandmother, Grandmother, weep with me
Under the boughs of a forest tree.

Winsome Bridget liked to ride
  The open fields at dawn.
She may have loved a Christopher,
  But then she married John.

Christina, when her husband died,
  So very long ago,
Trudged through wind and cold and storm
  To find him in the snow.

Now they are gone, my grandmothers,
  They left me here alone;
They sleep beneath the clover heads
  That tap against a stone.

But I'll go to them, yes, some day,
To Bridget and Christina;
I'll wake them with my little songs,
I, Josephina.

Grandmothers, Grandmothers, sing with me,
Three great-grandmothers we shall be!

Josephine Redmond Fishburn.

THE MOON

There is always a window
in my house
that lets in the moon.
I find her peering
unexpectedly
as I pick things from the floor
to hang them up.
I wonder why
I always see the moon
in such common places
between the bars
of my white iron bed
or over the rim of my dish-pan,
when most people
see her
behind a veil of wistaria
or a cloud
of shadowy swans.

Josephine Redmond Fishburn.

A BEE

A bee whirls a dervish dance
  On my one rose;
And I whirl a dervish dance
  On what—God knows!

Josephine Redmond Fishburn.

MOUNT TACOMA

Tacoma,
Wrought of twilight, or of moonlight,
Or the fragile tints of dawn,
Wrought of flaming sunsets,
In the varied moods of evening,
Or of morning!
With the spirit light of moonbeam,
With the living light of sunbeam,
Give new vision to those blinded
By the hardened light of gold!

Alice Hallam.

THE EAGLE'S NEST

Where the mountains are as shadows
Turned to stone,
Where the rushing winds and waters
Sound a call to tireless wing
Or flying thought,
There the eagles hold the heights
As rugged thrones,
Soar undaunted by the tempest and the gloom,
Soar undaunted by the mystery of light.

Alice Hallam.

A LADY

She stood within an arching frame of light
Against a background sketched in golden ray;
Her robe had gathered blueness from the day
And silvered iridescence from the night;
The music near her seemed her natural right.
When first I gazed, I thought in prayer to stay,
She shone as angel in her mien and way,
A vision of Angelico's rare sight.
But later in a world with shadow scrolled
She seemed less angel tangled in life's net.
Awhile I watched her qualities unfold,
By haunting wonder bitterly beset.
But now I know this lady's cause of fret:
She lacks enduring background of rich gold!

Alice Hallam.

TO L. P.

I

When fingering this old flute I muse of thee,
This sonnet-pipe of thin and formal tone,
So fair words flow to make thy beauties known—
Opal and onyx and chalcedony,
Moss agate, and gray amber of the sea—
As certes sing soft music of their own,
And paint before my soul, footsore and lone,
An image of the tower of ivory
That looketh toward Damascus. O most fair,
Set by sad magic on this highway bleak,
What violets did once thy threshold seek,
What gay gold dreams danced up thy golden stair
I know not. Let thy lonely glory speak
To poor fond pilgrim souls—the south lies there.

Nancy Ely Henshaw.

TO L. P.

II

If I could have the robing of you, sweet,
Full little other vesture should you wear,
Unless to foil the gray world's wintry stare,
Red gold and purple; or, to charm the heat
Of empty summer, cool green leaves were meet—
Save Beauty, strange and shimmeringly fair
With which Love veils you from your crow-winged hair
Down to the calyx whiteness of your feet.
And though it were indeed an idle quest
To match faint jewels with your topaz eyes,
Yet hath Love hung deep brow and tapering thighs
With chains of smoky diamonds, and to rest
In the white-violet hollow of your breast,
One mystic ruby, fallen from Paradise.

Nancy Ely Henshaw.

TO L. P.

III

As they of old time, peering down the gloom
Of hell's highway, where go the silent dead,
Discerned there surely Proserpine's crowned
head,
Rose promise of Earth's enigmatic tomb;
So we, who pause a moment in the fume
And fret of business and livelihead
And see but the implacable outer dread
More clearly from our better lighted room,
Even we, pale latter pagans, have our Queen
Of Death, to breathe sweet summer from his lair,
To flush with love his bony features stark,
Since you, adorable, uncowed, serene,
Whose own we must be, either here or there,
Have gone before us out into the dark.

Nancy Ely Henshaw.

TO THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Now while the old year wanes into a sleep,
And we have turned the parchment sheet that
wore
October's glowing rubric, to the shore
Of home the iron vessels slowly creep,
Bringing you back in pride, a poor still heap
Of ashes, dust and ashes, that once bore
A name. Henceforth forevermore
You are a symbol, for whom millions weep.

You did not think you were a symbol when
You walked into the troop ship, cursed the chow,
Or slithered through the liquid mud and fought,
As the whole outfit did, man among men;
Or when you died, not knowing why nor how.
Behold, the miracle that death has wrought!

Merton Jerome Hubert.

DANTE ALIGHIERI—1921

Six hundred years! And still the poet's song
Clangs down the swirling chasm-deeps of time.
Not with sweet-blending music, like the chime
Of an old town in Flanders, but with long
Reverberating clamor. Hark, the throng
Of mediæval voices! See, the crime
Scourged into shame! And gaze on the sublime
Dream where all strife is quelled, all hate, all wrong.

Six hundred years! And still men wait in vain,
Eager and yearning, for the day to dawn
When the swift Greyhound shall sweep clean and plain,
And drive the contentious to oblivion;
When Charon's ferry, laden down with pain,
No more shall ply the gloomy Acheron.

Merton Jerome Hubert.

WINTER DAYS

The days are sad old men with beards of gray,
  That shuffle drearily with heavy feet
Along a sullen ice-encrusted way,
  Turning dull, hopeless eyes on all they meet.

Each one bears on his withered, ancient shanks
  A frozen chain that, as he shambles, clanks;
And each one all dispiritedly tries
  To break his frozen chain; then slowly dies.

Merton Jerome Hubert.

THE RADICAL

Outside in the gray mist of March
A cardinal is singing,
Singing with furious swirl and bubble of music,
Chanting the unborn spring,
Or talking to the rabbit that I saw last night
Scurry across the road in the snow.
If I go to the window now I may see in the dull gray mist,
A flash of forbidden color,
A streak of living ruby,
A little bundle of blazing melody,
Dive through the naked branches of the sycamore,
And outrageously flaunt the withering omnipotence of winter.

Merton Jerome Hubert.

TO CARL SANDBURG

I

I heard you read:
Your voice sang calmly, calmly,
Like an organist's fingers wandering over a keyboard,
And the things you read were like an organist improvising,
An organist who had just walked
From Chinatown to Central Park,
And beyond.
You told of lawyers and hangmen
And apple blossoms and chorus-girls and the sway of the wind;
Jazz-bands, crap-shooters, baby-vamps,
Autumn mist, broken gargoyles, Kalamazoo,
The voices of Italian children,
Jesse James and the fire of sunset,
And a thousand other things.

II

As you read I had a sudden vision,
An authentic, old-fashioned vision,
Which I give you liberty to laugh at
If you like:
The inside of a great hall,
Romanesque arches, heavy and cumbersome, squatting in the torch-light,
A mighty table, torches that smoke and crackle,
Flaring on the faces of men,
Flaring scarlet, flaring crimson,
Wine and shouting and laughter;
Dogs yapping and quarreling over bones,
The master of the castle
Lording it over his men,
Dark faces of men that love and fight,
Faces that speak as the torch-light flares.

III

Then a bard begins to sing,
A bard of the North, a trouvère,
None of your sickly, simpering troubadours of the South;
He sings of William that fought the Saracens,
William, the Short-Nosed, the doughty warrior,
Gleaming in dark steel,
Guiborc, his wife, his nephew Vivien,
Fighters all.
He tells how they took the city and killed the infidels.
"Pagans are wrong and Christians are right,"
He sings, and they listen.
The talk stops around the table—
Their eyes gleam, for they know the story:
Clashing armor and broken swords,
A plundered town, and smoke and the screams of women;
They know the story, these men that listen,
And their eyes never leave his lips.
The things he sings are the things they know,
And they listen.
Even the dogs stop growling as the bard sings on.

IV

Then the vision went away.
I heard your voice, singing, singing,
Singing of purple martins and a sergeant at Belleau Wood,
And a jazz-band—
I looked at the people in the room:
Every one of them had his eyes fixed on your face.

Merton Jerome Hubert.

MARYLAND

And so we stayed, my friend and I,
  On the warm rocks and sun-dried moss
Which frowned upon the valley fair
  Like battlements above a fosse.

Beneath our feet the sullen stone
  Curved in so sharply that we seemed
Safely to hang on empty air—
  And there we lay all day and dreamed.

I watched the big brown buzzards fly
  In widening circles overhead,
Riding the autumn wind like leaves,
  Or dip their wings and drop like lead

Far, far below us, till they skimmed
  The quivering treetops red and gold,
Which, like a gorgeous tapestry,
  Spread out before us, fold on fold.

But all too soon the twilight crept
  Amongst the trees. We rose and sighed
To take the path among the rocks,
  Slow winding down the mountainside.

And in our hearts a touch of awe
  We bore, that quiet awe which fills
The hearts of all those who have known
  The ancient purple of the hills.

Edward M. James.

A PICTURE

See, I have placed you where the last faint light
Ere the green western skies fade into night
  Shall linger in your eyes.
The pleasant night wind seems to stroke your
    hair
Gently, so gently, with a touch as fair
  And smooth as satin old world ivories.

Shadows, and deeper shadows, yet you smile
Up at me through the dusk, a little while
  And you will go, too soon
Into the dark, and that dim bank of trees
Be silhouettes, like old-time memories,
  Across the fields, against the rising moon.

Edward M. James.

CYPRESS

This is the song the cypress sings
To the winds that round him play;
Sings to the fields of glittering stars
Or the round moon's softer ray.

"I have seen man grow as the golden dawn
Spreads in the eastern skies,
I have watched him die as the sunset light
Fades from his weary eyes.

"Over the charnel house and tomb,
Where the breeze is a faintest breath,
I keep my watch, while the carded mists
Arise from the walls of death.

"I have read man's heart, I have laughed with him.
Has he wept? I have shared his tears.
Mine is the right to guard his sleep
Through the swing of the changing years."

This is the song the cypress sings
Where the wheeling swallows fly,
When the dusk steals forth and the evening star
Flames in a vacant sky.

Edward M. James.

FAITH

I wonder how the birds know
  That spring their wings will follow,
When winds blow cold and bitter
  And snow lies in the hollow?

Down in the languorous Southland,
  Mid groves of spice and flowers,
They might have lived in sunshine
  And sung away the hours.

But forth they journeyed northward
  Through sleet, and fog, and rain;
They did not stop to question
  If spring would come again.

Sometimes in the bleakness
  Of real or fancied wrong,
I tune my heart to listen,
  And catch the first Spring song.

Then something glows within me,
  And *I* know Spring will follow,
Though winds blow cold and bitter,
  And snow lies in the hollow.

Mabel Hubbard Johnson.

CINCINNATI BY NIGHT

(FROM MT. ECHO PARK)

A weary Cinderella, she
Creeps from her tidied scullery,
And drapes a scarf, mantilla-wise,
To bring the youth back to her eyes.
Around her scarred and battered feet
She winds the river, cool and sweet,
And in her coiffure, gray and thin,
She thrusts a glassy jeweled pin,
And passion red on work-numbed hands,
Glow rubies set in golden bands.
The diamonds deepening her hair
Make Prince Night think her young and fair;
But when at dawn he lifts her veil,
He finds a scullion, old and pale.

Mabel Hubbard Johnson.

WORDS

Words are birds
Flitting in and out
Among the leafiness of my desire for
beauty;
Sometimes, growing bold,
They perch upon my dormered sill
And peck the crumbs I strew there;
But when I stretch my eager hand
They dart away into the sky
From whence they came.
Sometimes, parenting,
They build nests
Woven of the fabric of my dreams;
And when the time is full,
The hard shells of the silence
Break—
And gargoyles raise their naked heads!
What will these fledglings be—
Blue-pinioned warblers—or merely—
Cowbirds?

Words are birds.

Mabel Hubbard Johnson.

THE POOL

A pool of water
Lay within a field:
A pool, 'twas nothing more.

About its edge
Grew weeds and grass
In rank display.
No bud or flower
Gave color to the spot,
Nor scattered fragrance
On the moist, cool air.

To me it seemed
The pool was sad;
For no one looked
Beyond the weeds and grass
Which made the spot unlovely.

But as the day grew to a close
And misty azure overspread the sky,
In preface to the darkness soon to come,
I moved to where the water lay
And gazed into its depths.

And lo, beneath its surface calm,
But, as it were,
Unnumbered leagues away,
Appeared a light,
Uncanny, clear, and twinkling bright.

My heart stood still:
For in that moment I beheld
Within the darkening pool
The image of the only star
That sparkled in the sky.

And to my mind
The lovely pool,
Quite hidden by the weeds and grass,
Nor cared for in the day,
Became, at night,
A noble setting
For the precious gem
Which heaven had sent
To make its modest soul
More beautiful.

A pool of water
Lay within a field:
A pool it was. Ah, more.

George H. Kattenhorn.

TO A YELLOW TULIP

Kissed by a ray of the morning sun,
  Your petals begin to unfold,
And lo, in a moment of ecstasy,
  You offer a chalice of gold.

Moist with a touch of the early dew,
  You gather its essence to mold
A pearl in the depths of your golden cup
  That glows with a beauty untold.

Sweet as a breath of the myriad buds
  That grow in my garden fair,
A perfume your radiant lips exhale,
  Delicate, fragrant, and rare.

Just as your petals, at break of morn,
  Clasp tenderly, close to your heart,
So, tinged with the richness of sunset gold,
  They clasp as the day-beams depart.

George H. Kattenhorn.

THE LARK AND THE BUTTERFLY

A butterfly rested upon a rose
And opened its wings to the light;
And all the colors of all the flowers
Were fused in its wings so bright.

A sky-lark sped over the heavens blue
And caroled its melody gay;
And all the music of all the birds
Was spent in its beautiful lay.

The lark came down from its home in the clouds
And sang to the butterfly vain;
"Ah me, if such wonderful wings were mine,
How happy would be my refrain."

The butterfly noted the lark's complaint
And silently fluttered away;
"Ah me, what are beauty and colors bright
To one who is mute all the day?"

The skylark carried the butterfly
On a journey far distant and long;
And all their beauty and melody
Were borne on the wings of song.

George H. Kattenhorn.

STRANGE, IS IT NOT?

Strange, is it not, that youth will always sing
With heart so filled, and with such bitter grief,
Of birds that fly from autumn's withered leaf
Of dying summer, born of dying spring?
Not for the leaf, but for the withering;
Not for the age, but for the growing old;
The winter's coming, not the winter's cold,
And the bird never, but the taking wing.
Yet being old, and finding place among
The walkers in the dusk, he sings no more
Of all dear beauty that has gone before—
The death of youth by youth alone is sung.
Is age a sorrow, then, too great to share?
Or, to be old, perhaps, is not to care.

Edward D. Kennedy.

WHEN THE GODS LAUGH

When the gods laugh, they do not laugh in glee;
But when the first two lovers, hand in hand,
Mounted to some high place where they might
stand
And watch the plain before them, and the sea,
And the far skies above; and then said he:
"Let us be always lovers, always know
The rapture of this moment; let us grow
Old in our love and in our ecstasy."
And she replied: "The rose and oak decay,
Sun, moon, and stars burn out and leave the
sky
Empty, all things of earth will pass away,
And we live on—we two who do not die."
And then it was their laughter had its birth,
The laughter of the gods, that is not mirth.

Edward D. Kennedy.

I WISH IT WERE

I wish that it were I whom they would lay
To-morrow in that opening in the ground,
Never to know the sunlight any day,
Or blossoming of flowers, or any sound.
I wish it were my heart that did not beat,
My eyes that could not open to the light,
My face where death mocked life in cold deceit—
I wish that it were I who died last night.
And yet I am ashamed that I should be
So selfish as to wish that I might go,
Asking the simpler, easier way for me,
Leaving the difficult for you to know.
And you are dead, and so cannot forgive
That wish that I might die, and you might live.

Edward D. Kennedy.

LET US REMEMBER

Let us remember always to be wise,
Knowing that life holds so much more than this;
More than your hand in mine, more than a kiss,
More than my words of love and love's replies.
Something of you is hidden from my eyes,
And I may seek forever, uselessly,
Though you have lighted eager lamps for me
To guide my feet, yet in the end it lies
Beyond my searching.
Two can never reach
An absolute communion, but must stay
With spirits individual, each to each;
And after death there is no gathering place
For travelers who have met along the way
And walked together for a little space.

Edward D. Kennedy.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Bewitching city on the wall that binds the azure bay,
Letting the waves caress your naked feet.
Your azure eyes are young, your glance insouciantly bright,
The smiles upon your sunny mouth are sweet.

You wear your old and faded skirts with such a charming grace,
They seem designed alone to make more fair
The roses and the jasmine that mingle at your belt,
The rosy oleanders in your hair.

Clara Odell Lyon.

CHIMNEYS

Factory pipes,
  Clustering, towering,
Grimy and grim,
  Sinister, lowering.

Cutting the sky
  Noisily, mordantly;
Clashing with day
  Ever discordantly.

Throats belching smoke
  Impish and hideous,
Spreading a veil
  Darkly insidious.

Till drops the sun—
  Hour mysterious!
Clustering pipes,
  Slender, imperious,

Velvety black,
  Giving intensity
To the still west's
  Crimson immensity.

Clara Odell Lyon.

LET US GO A-GYPSYING

Come, let us go a-gypsying! We'll steal a day
from care;
To you, love, to me, love, the open spaces call;
Our hearts to each will fonder ring,
While joyful we go wandering
Where Nature, freely squandering,
Pours beauty over all.

Come, let us go a-gypsying! We'll take the
yellow road
This fair day, this rare day, this perfect day
of June;
In leafy ways go dandering,
Trace ferny brooks meandering,
Hear summer winds philandering,
And bathe us in the noon.

Come, let us go a-gypsying! We'll drink of its
delights;
The air is tinged with heaven, and the sun is
shining gold;
The trees in vivid green are dressed,
The trees are at their loveliest,
And summer's fairest palimpsest
Before us is unrolled.

Clara Odell Lyon.

TO L. P.

The air is grey over the dusty desert of grey sand,
No living thing moves on the silent grey of far-stretched plain,
Even the long grass is matted grey,
Even the twisted bushes stand in stunted grey,
And over all the dead grey sky is far—too far away—
Clouds that may drop somewhere, but never here, in pleasant rain.
Oh, strange grey air,
Oh, dusty, silent, twilight air unlit
By even the slightest sweetest breath of little wind,
Oh, lifeless grey,
Out of you come flowers softly falling on my face,
Narcissus and yellow roses and deep purple violets,
And blue forget-me-nots—the gentlest—on my lips.
Are they memories or hope or are they love
Which is made out of nothing and is lovely?
For I alive love one who is now dead
And there is nothing left to me but flowers.

Mary MacMillan.

REVOLUTION

The dawning sun glared in my eyes,
Blood-red in the old grey of the east,
Lighting the white window-shade,
Glaring along the floor,
Firing my crumpled white sheet,
Firing my smooth, white walls,
Flaming into my eyes,
Firing my dim blue eyes that were only made to see,
Scorching my eyes with the flames
From the turbulent sky,
Blood-red and rolling and hot.
No wind blew, no water lapped,
Only the crimson wings beating the sky to blood.

All day my eyes sought the blue,
Avoiding the mad bird above,
The flaming sun flapping its wings as it made from the east to the west.
My longing eyes sought the north,
To lave in it, cool in it, drink of the blue,
The deep, still, passionate blue,
The desire of my soul.

The great bird dropped in the west,
Scorching the edge of the world,
And the flames ran back and up,
Setting fire to the sky,
Glaring with hot unrest,
Till the east again answered the west,
And no blue was left in the north,
Scorching and glaring blood-red
From the flapping wings of the dying bird.

My hot eyes longed for the dark,
For the quiet and blackness of death.

Mary MacMillan.

INCOMPATIBILITY

All I want is a little house
With a garden of flowers and an apple tree,
With a hill behind and the sky above,
And a hearth with a fire for me.

You like a palace with carved oak chairs,
With crystal and gold and tapestry,
With waiting men and brilliant lights,
And a throng for company.

You face the sun, I face the moon,
There's a twisted cord from you to me,
A knotted cord, and oh, my dear,
Love is captivity.

Mary MacMillan.

THE CITY

They always call me "she,"
Draping me decorously with the feminine gender,
And my old clean-shaven lips turn up at the corners in a smile,
And I wink my old, sharp, faded left eye;
For I am no goddess of sentimental church-goers,
I am a beautiful old roué,
Because I have always taken fresh young girls.
My cheeks are leathern,
But I wear a gay little boutonniere in the lapel of my coat
And a lavender tie
And grey spats
And a seal ring on the little finger of my wrinkled left hand.
I carry a crook-handled cane on my arm,
I have manners,
And bow to wealth and shrug my shoulders at poverty.
I am old and able to pay;
I want fresh young boys,
But more especially fresh, plump young girls,
And I shall have them always.

Mary MacMillan.

DEAD APRIL

April night again, April stars again, April blossoms,
And I with one side of my head blown off lie in a soldier's grave in France.
I know how it is back home, back home in Ohio,
The night is cool and dark, it is deep blue and cool,
Full of the scent of fruit blossom and lilac and flowering clove,
As a wine cup is full of wine,
Stars are the beads and bubbles from the winey cup of night,
The night is sheer as anemones,
It is tender and scented as black hair curling about your fingers,
Lilac bushes out on the lawn mingle their breath
With the good sound breath of the sward new-rolled,
Where the drive trails into the road
And the road goes winding round the hill
Where the redbuds and dogwoods are,
On down to the bridge over the creek,
Where you hear the waterfall up above pouring over ledges of flat, blue shale,
A midnight orchestra for the little green frogs to sing to.
Wind from the woods again,
Oh, wind from the woods of walnut and elm and oak,
Fringing themselves with new young leaves,
And the road goes on past farms
Where the cows are out again at night in pastures of lush green grass.
Night again, April night again,
With the air full of flowers as the sky of stars.

Poppies have no odor, but there are not even
poppies.
You say I have a glorious grave, but there is no
glory in this wooden box
Wherein I lie stretched out, rotting, with the
earth beaten down hard over me.
Take no unction to yourself that there are
poppies,
There is nothing but a wooden cross bearing
my name
And a few weeds that are the first to grow.
No one comes near the ugly place,
I am miles away from any life,
Only the other dead are about me,
Dead young men rotting underground like me,
Silently thinking their own thoughts of what
they would like to be doing.
I am dead in alien France,
And I want to be alive at home again in Ohio,
Working in my office, playing tennis, marrying
my young bride.
She was betrothed to me when I left,
But to-night she rides in the automobile of a
man older than I, who made munitions.
I do not blame her,
She was full of lusty life, as I was, and her lips
are now soft and warm,
If I had lived she would have been true to me.
I would go again, oh, yes, I would go,
Cursing old men who make wars, cursing uni-
forms and munitions.
For I should be alive to-night,
Driving my car swiftly along Ohio roads,
With my girl beside me again in the blossom-
scented April air again
Under the April stars.

Mary MacMillan.

RAIN WIND

I come to you in the spring night,
In the softness of the strong southwind,
In the night personal with the charm of the rain wind,
In the night sentient with the coming of rain,
The air swinging and singing about you and to you,
The night intimate, expectant, in a wild joy,
Caressing you before and because of the oncoming rain,
It is I that caress you in the wind,
I in the mad dried leaf whirling after you on the pavement,
I in the swiftly adventuring cloud,
I in the struggling branches of the oak tree,
I in the cloud-strewn moon,
I in the signal stars,
I in the wind-alive night,
I with my love of you.

Mary MacMillan.

SHIPS WITH YOUR SILVER NETS

Ships with your silver nets
  And white, aspiring spars
What has the green sea yielded,
  And the blue sea set with stars?

"Cod and haddock and mackerel;
  "These are the precious store
"Our nets have dragged in the billowy dawn
  "From the shifting ocean floor."

"Haddock and cod and mackerel!"
  Stuff for the belly's need;
But what of the stuff of beauty
  Frailer and rarer indeed?

What of the frail sea flowers
  Your gleaming nets brought up?
What of the sea anemones
  Fragile and fair as a cup?

What of the pulsing daphnids,
  What of the shimmering sheen
Of the weedy forests your nets uproot
  Golden and brown and green?

And what of the red dawn's magic
  Through which your white sails lift,
The high moon's silver reticence,
  The high stars singing drift?

Fishermen out of all the world,
  Netters of haddock and cod,
What has the green sea yielded,
  And the blue sea starred of God?

Wade Oliver.

MOUNTAINY MEN

The mountainy men have bright eyes
And red lips curled for laughter;
Fists of iron have the mountainy men,
Voices to rattle the rafter;

Horses to ride as fleet as wind,
Hale as the mountainy weather;
O' nights they pasture on stars and frost
With a wild grapevine for tether.

The mountainy men, the mountainy men,
They hurl great thunderbolts into the glen;
The mountainy men hurl thunderbolts,
Then roll them up again.

The mountainy men, they sleep on peaks
With a gaunt, bare rock for pillow;
Whenever they snore the mountainy tops
Quiver and sway like a willow.

They sleep on peaks, the mountainy men,
With a bare, gaunt rock for pillow,
And into the glen their long hair falls
Billow on thunderous billow.

The mountainy men, the mountainy men,
They hurl the sky down into the glen;
The mountainy men hurl down the sky,
Then roll it up again.

Wade Oliver.

WITCH OF THE WOOD

"To banish care I know a way!"
Quoth Witch of the Wood upon a day.

"Take a bag with three black strings;
Hum the tune the wood-thrush sings.
Carry the bag among the trees;
The strings shall loosen. On your knees,
Peer once into the bag's dark mouth,
Then wander north and wander south.
Gather a pine cone gnarled and gray,
The feather of a shy thrush, gay
Sly laughter from a chuckling stream,
A sun ray on a stone agleam,
The west wind's song, a feathery blade
Of marsh grass blowing in the glade.
Into the bag they all shall go.
To banish care a way I know!"
Quoth Witch of the Wood upon a day:
"To banish care I know a way!"

"Fill the bag up to the brim;
It will make a man of him.
For, listen closely: When you're through
You are the bag, the bag is you!
Up to the brim with beauty run
Back to your toil ere rise of sun.
The bag with three black strings pulled tight
Leave in the wood. Some other night
Someone shall find it, find and stay,
Like you, to put his cares away,
Humming the tune the wood-thrush sings
To loosen care's three dismal strings."

"To banish care I know a way!"
Quoth Witch of the Wood upon a day.

Wade Oliver.

REQUIEM

In dreamless, uncomplaining sleep
  Beside the dreaming sea she lies,
Untouched by lyric loveliness
  Of bird and wave and windy skies.

Yet, loving loveliness, she made
  More lovely all she gazed upon,
And every May shall plead her cause
  With silence and oblivion.

Wade Oliver.

VIGIL

My father's bones lie buried deep
  In ribbed rock and shifting sea,
And yet my fathers vigil keep
  Above the sentience that is me.

Along my brain's white commisures
  Their lives, a subtle lightning, play,
Lighting the dusk in which endures
  The psychic something that was they.

Within my farthest consciousness
  The lightnings flash; electrons move
And sweep from unformed lifelessness
  To life which bids me hate and love.

Wade Oliver.

WINTER NIGHT

When the killing frost like a scimitar
Flashes its edge from star to star,
When icicles hang from the bearded limb
And the ruddy fire on the hearth goes dim,

Then Silence sings with a keen, clear voice
That makes the cold, dead moon rejoice,
While the querulous owl, with quavering note,
Feels icy death a-pluck at his throat.

Wade Oliver.

SNOWFALL

Billows of soundlessness,
Rolling from the pale sea of silence,
Drowning angles and jangles discordant,
Billows of soundlessness,
Mute with imprisoned melody,
White with unprismed harmony.

Loueen Pattee.

RAIN AT NIGHT

Vast silken curtains
Swaying from the dark arch of night,
Fraying their hems to swishing fringes
On the jagged roofs
Of little silent cities asleep.

Loueen Pattee.

AT THE SERPENT MOUND

A road
Serpentining
Through fresh, crisp November.
Dim fields wigwamed with cornshocks,
Lashed to the soil
By staccato shadows.
Gaunt, ghostly sycamores
Marking the sluggish creek
That winds through the forgotten valley,
Ashen-limbed, flame-topped.
The jutting glacial rock
Its challenge to the harvest shorn fields.
Deserted bird nests
Cling to leafless boughs.
Mandrake.
Timelessness.
Men of stone,
Obsidium, moonstone, chalcedony,
An age without gold,
Without iron.

Loueen Pattee.

CONTENTMENT

All day I have been with the sky,
And seen its white ships sailing by
And dug a hole for the spring to fill,
And watched the sheep upon the hill,
And heard the birds call clear and low,
And found a place where blue flowers
grow.

But now all is quite hushed and still,
The sun is gone behind the hill,
And only now and then I hear
A faint, far bird-call, tender—clear,
Quietly flows the river now
And quiet every leaf and bough.

Oh, it is joy enough to lie
And see the leaves notch out the sky,
And happiness enough to find
The watchful hills are loving kind,
To wait by quiet pasture bars
The clear, sweet candlelight of stars.

Eugenia Lea Remelin.

SONG

I have known hours of laughter and loveliness,
  I have known hours of waiting and of pain;
With singing I have found the sunny uplands,
  Wandering, I have groped through storm and
    rain.

But whether happy to be loved and loving,
  Or lonely as a cold, gray winter sea;
One bit of beauty, like a far-off singing,
  Has always lifted up the heart of me.

One star that shines above the poplars blowing,
  A bit of Queen Anne's lace beside the way,
A hill half misty when the dawn is breaking,
  And I am glad to live another day.

Eugenia Lea Remelin.

SONG

Come not until the pale moon
  Is sweet above the dew;
Come not until the evening
  Is stealing up anew

Across the orchard where the apples hang
  And shadows on the grass
Are patched and patterned
  Where our footsteps pass.

Come not until the pale moon
  Hangs in the silver west;
Love is so frail—for a white moth's flying
  Evening is best.

Eugenia Lea Remelin.

BEAUTY

I do not see you come or go,
  I only feel you pass—
Breath of a rose, stirring of wings
  Over the meadow grass.

Beauty swift as an April wind
  Through a blossoming cherry tree;
Beauty poised like a white bird-sail
  Over a summer sea.

Face of you, form of you, Beauty, I know not,
  But ere the dawn time I feel you pass;
Yours is the lilt of the morning, the evening
  Pauses a-hush for your step in the grass.

Eugenia Lea Remelin.

APRIL AFTERNOON

Out of my window all I could see
Was the tossing green of a maple tree.

All I could see was the green and the sky
And little white clouds that the wind pushed by.

All I could hear was the wind in the tree,
Like the whispered voice of a far-off sea.

And yet the quiet hours rode by
In a sun-crowned blue of pageantry;

And yet the silent afternoon
Was rich with a gold-embroidered tune.

The tree and the sky and the wind, these three
Were enough of the April world for me.

Eugenia Lea Remelin.

THE TREES

The house is haunted by old trees—
So close they stand and still;
No yellow sunlight seeps through their shingled leaves
And drips down on the sill.
Beech with the mist on his flanks,
Pine whose old voice is a muffled bell,
Gaunt, wan-bodied poplar
That has a bitter smell,
Tapping elm and oak tree—
They stoop and peer within
By the side of the twisted apple tree,
His gray hands under his chin.
They do nothing but peer and haunt through the windows
That are dead as the eyes of the drowned;
And listen until their silence
Makes a strangeness all around.
Then suddenly they quiver and shake at the wind
Their arms that are furrowed as river sands,
And whisper "Did you see?" to one another
And beckon to one another with their hands;
And they laugh a hungry laughter
There is no one understands.
By night they creep close to the windows
As quiet as gray lichens creep,
And pick at the catches with their fingers—
How can they get in, and peep
To see their own shadows thronging
The quiet house of sleep.
Yes, they look in at their own shadows
Stealing up by the stair
To the closed doors of the chambers,
And listening there,

They watch how their shadows with pulseless
fingers
Noiselessly push and strain,
And beat their breasts on the dark panels
To open them, in vain;
And how the thin moonlight trickles round them,
Creeping down by the banisters again.

Eloise Robinson.

I PUT MY BODY DOWN

I put my body down each night
Upon a high bed, warm and white,
And lay its hands upon the sheet
One over one, as it is meet,
And fold its hair out, soft and straight
Upon the pillow-slip to wait
Until I come for it again.
Then in the starlight or the rain
I must go down and make my bed
Among long rows of other dead,
And creep beneath the blankets grey
And shut my eyes and be as they.
Ah, what amazing thing am I
To live by day, at night to die!

I feel my arms lie straight and stiff
Against my sides. I know that if
I raise my lids the dark will press
Down on my eyes with heaviness.
I feel, beneath my white breast bone,
My heart, a round and heavy stone
(It is a strange and fearful thing
To have a heart that will not sing.)
The clods weigh down upon my knees,
I cannot move them when I please,
Nor shift my weary head about,
Nor stretch and thrust a cramped arm
out;
The dead must lie as they are put,
All orderly, head, hand, and foot.
And though their thoughts like embers burn,
They must lie still, they may not turn.
Of all still things the stillest far
Are those who dead and buried are;
For buds and grass bend with the breeze,

And winds bow down the tallest trees,
And seeds that fall sprout one by one,
And mountains swing to meet the sun,
And stones are heaved up by the frost—
The whole earth swims till it has crossed
A million times a-past the sun,
And it shall still a million.
But all the dead in all the lands
Lie still with heavy feet and hands.

For if the dead could walk as we
They'd cover earth and all the sea
Would be a shining plain of these
As tall and straight as forest trees.
If all the dead the earth has kept
Might move a little as they slept,
The whole round world would heave and stir,
And men would fear to walk on her,
So many are the dead that sleep
Row after row and deep on deep.

Those men whom death has drenched and drowned
Talk with each other in the ground.
They use the words the living say,
But all the dust is blown away,
And each word shines, when it is done,
As golden as a little sun,
For dead men never use their words
To hide their thoughts, but they are birds
That spring up one by one and fly
Through widening circles in the sky.

I hear them say that God is love
And all the sod is lit above
With stars that are like flowers and bees

And blossoms white in apple trees;
With moons that swing on golden boughs
Or sail like ships with shining prows;
With comet lights that trail and run
Across the stars, across the sun;
There is such glory overhead
The dead forget that they are dead.

I hear them say that all men are
Made brothers now upon our star:
It is as if their doors were wide
And all the dead had stepped outside;
The earth they loved is theirs once more,
But more completely than before,
For they are life of it, made one
With trees and earth and men and sun.
They sing within the falling rain
And earth is new and green again;
They are the strength of which a part
Ticks deep within the human heart,
That thrills the little birds when they
Hop from their nests and fly away;
That flows in all the smallest things
That crawling go, or move on wings,
Or down within the dark earth be
Or measure leagues of shining sea.
They swell the clouds whose sails were furled
Along the edges of the world;
They climb within the pine tree's stem,
Stars are high brothers unto them.
Of all who live they share the breath,
They know at last there is no death.

Such wonders I have heard them say
Within their deep graves laid away.
Could I remember all again

When I come back and walk with men,
Then I should go, not sadly, but
As one on whom Death cannot shut
His dusty doors, though I be dead
And dismal prayers on me be said;
As one on whom the sun has shone
And all the stars have looked upon,
We know both dead and living be
But God's own shining self, and he
Is kind and makes his house with me.

Eloise Robinson.

AH, NO, I SHALL NOT ENVY

Ah, no, I shall not envy you hereafter,
  Dido, Antigone, where you have gone.
Nor Atalanta, full of lovely laughter,
  Nor you, white Helen, made to look upon.
Nor not Alcestis, loving and so loved,
  A god himself thrust back old Death from you.
Now I have in my own beloved proved
  That your bright fabled heroes all were true.

For if there is a place dead lovers go,
  Seeing us pass, the little Juliet
Will turn even in the arms of Romeo,
  And Sappho, so long burning, will forget,
And Cleopatra, shining like the moon,
  Sigh she was born those thousand years too soon.

Eloise Robinson.

TO-DAY I SAW BRIGHT SHIPS

To-day I saw bright ships come swinging home
In the proud, magic beauty of their bows;
I will not say again that dust can house
You who were singing with them through the foam.
You loved them once, for blue ways they would roam,
Hazarding great wild winds upon their prows,
And rough old seas that would with them espouse—
For silks and jade, red wine and honeycomb.
I will not wrong so your adventurous soul,
Thinking you lie in dreams and do forget
White spume across the deck, wind in the spars.
Death was a harbor and a transient goal
Wherefrom you pass now, with your skysail set
For ports beyond the margin of the stars.

Eloise Robinson.

ALREADY THAT OLD TIME

Already that old time we went in, now
  Is like a little town built by the sea;
Our ship has cast her moorings and her prow
  Slides backward silently along the quay.
It was our own, once, where we passed the days;
  It is a strange place now. We can but screen
Dim eyes that follow with an aching gaze;
  The peakèd red roofs fade, walls blur, and green
Low hills sink in the ocean one by one.
  Though they were near to us, nothing of all
These things shall be—no wide square drenched in sun.
  No idling fishers by the red sea wall;
We shall not buy nor eat there—not again
Sleep while its low eaves whisper with the rain.

Eloise Robinson.

MIDDLE-AGED SPRING SONG

Spring, you painted miracle,
  Posing, pirouetting,
Since what endless ages
  You have been coquetting!

Æons of peach blossoms
  Rouge your machinations;
Centuries of suns tint
  Your sophistications.

Myriads of mating birds
  Willed your voice its luring,
Endless evanescences
  Are in you enduring.

Crescent moons and shy, white stars,
  Violets, and the vernal
Pussy willows, sun-hot showers—
  Serially eternal.

Groups of girls and throbbing boys
  Tryst with you, elated,
Sure your foam-fresh loveliness
  New for them created.

Hymning still your youth as they
  Did ere died King Priam:
BUT YOU KNOW, SPRING, YOU ARE OLD...
  Older, even, than I am!

Alice Read Rouse.

CIGALE OF THE RIVER

The cold has sucked the colour from the river,
Dull gray its hurrying waters. All the bridges
Shudder with frost-ringed lamps. A shiver
Of winds is wuthering through the cables.
Ridges
Of gelid mud clamp the dun banks where glowing
Furnace-throats, choked with incessant snowing,
Gape raw and lurid through the sleet-whirl.
Gasping
Against the icy shores, in dingy fragile
Fretwork fripperies, hung with strings of agile
Lights that dance like frozen fireflies, rasping
A panting cough, a steamboat lies—a Creole
Forlorn and stranded in an Arctic Sheol,
Mourning lost levees, banquettes rimm'd with
roses. . . .
Alas, Cigale! . . . The black night 'round her
closes. . . .

Alice Read Rouse.

DE TOAS'

(BANJO OBLIGATO)

Dis here's Chris'mas, glory be!
And a toas' we all gwine drink.
You bound to drink a toas' at Chris'mastime
If you don't want your libber to swink.
(*Your lights will pine and your libber will swink,*
And it's mighty bad luck if you don't drink.)

So here's to de Chris'mas doin's! Lan',
We all gwine drink *dat* toas'!
To de Chris'mas gif's and de Chris'mas drams
And de Chris'mas possum roas'!
(*Don't you hold dat glass in your left hand:*
It's mighty bad luck! Don't you do dat, man!)

Here's to de junkettin'! Here's to de dance!
Norate de Chris'mas feas'!
To all de yearth we drinks, "Good will!"
De banjo pick! Sing "Peace!"
(*Git your rabbit's foot out! Put dat razzer away!*
It's mighty bad luck to git to fightin' to-day!)

And here's to de Chris'mas sperit! Lawd,
I tremmles to drink dat toas';
For I loves de livin' and I loves de los',
But I's powerful skeered of a ghos'!
(*But it's mighty bad luck de dead to slight,*
An you sholy does hone for 'em Chris'mas night!)

So drink dat toas' and s'lute your ch'ice!
Twell de moon draps down in de wes'!
Swing your partners! Pat dat floor!
Twell de stars sets down to res'!
(*For it's mighty bad luck not to Chris'mas dance—*
Hands all 'round twell we hoodoos de ha'nts!)

TORMENT

Dust is desired. Delilah,
  Helen's bright hair moths consume;
But the lilies of Canaan flame scarlet,
  Gold the Greek daffodils bloom.

Jeanne la Pucelle's heart is ashes,
  Rosamond's mouth's clogged with clay;
Yet the fleur de lys flaunt in Domrémy,
  England's all rosed with the May.

Low in the earth my love lieth,
  Violets bloom of her breath;
Wreathes for thy victory, ironic Grave,
  For thy sting, venom, O Death!

Alice Read Rouse.

TRICKED

She took her rose-white maidenhood,
  Her faith, her verity,
And mingled them with nine pale moons
  Of dreams and agony:
Rapt from the torture then breathed she:
"Love, I have made a man for thee."

She took her patient womanhood,
  Her prayers, her ecstasy,
And with them wrought a full score years.
  At last, triumphantly,
Led she him forth, tall, proud, and free:
"Life, I have made a man for thee!"

But when in anguished motherhood
  She searched where he might be,
On vultured field, in bloody trench,
  A grinning shape mocked: "Flee,
Woman, for Death am I! Ha, see,
Fool, thou hast made thy man—*for me!*"

Alice Read Rouse.

MAY

May comes stepping down the spring
Delicately.

They have taken a web of the finest silk
  And spun the gold of her hair;
They have taken the grapevine's tender green
  And made her a robe to wear;
The embroidered girdle about her waist
  Is the blue of her brooding eyes,
And the flowing sweep of her slender grace
  A remembrance of willow sighs.
To her breast she presses a blossomed bough
  As she moves toward the year's high noon;
For with solemn sweetness she goes before,
  Bridesmaid to the radiant June.

May comes stepping down the spring
Delicately.

Bertha Stephenson.

IN DECEMBER

Down in my garden,
My little formal garden,
The nasturtiums are bent in a frozen salaam,
Brown leaves hanging to spent stalks
Rattle in the wind
Like ghostly castanets.
All summer long I watered the garden
With my own hands;
And now it has left me nothing
But tatters of desolation.

But up where I live
The young barberry bushes
That stood sturdily about the foundations
And fended for themselves
Have brought a gay tangle
Of living red
And wreathed my house.

Bertha Stephenson.

INTERLUDE

He kissed my rosy fingertips
So tenderly I let the sway
Of love impel me swiftly on
And faced with him the shining dawn
Of perfect years that stretched away.

I kiss my pallid fingertips
And blow it back with lightest breath
To dreams that are forever stilled,
To promises, all unfulfilled,
That cost me each a little death.

Bertha Stephenson.

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